

California Department of Education
Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Elementary Education Newsletter

Greetings from the Superintendent...

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This issue of the *Elementary Education Newsletter* addresses topics for the fall months and beyond. The articles in this edition focus on the Connecting Kids to Healthcare program, after school programs, avian influenza, the *California Kindergarten Survey 2006*, the *2006 Visitor's Guide to High Performing Elementary Schools*, and resources to assist schools to prepare for a possible pandemic.

As we begin another school year I am pleased to report that the budget passed earlier this year by the Legislature brings welcome support to education in California public schools. I am particularly pleased that the budget for this fiscal year includes increased funding for school counselors, teacher professional development, programs targeted to helping students pass the high school exit exam, and expanded and improved student nutrition programs. Even though the outlook for education funding is brighter, I will continue to urge lawmakers to approve bills that expand opportunities for students to gain skills required in the competitive global economy through rigorous academics and real world work experience.

Attorney General Bill Lockyer and I made the announcement in July 2006 that 33 school districts and county education offices have been awarded \$16.1 million in grants through the new School Community Violence Prevention (SCVP) program, which funds efforts to protect students by curbing violence in schools.

This year the grant recipients included five elementary schools: Kernville Elementary and Woodrow Wallace Elementary in the Kernville Union School District; Discovery Bay Elementary and Timber Point Elementary in the Byron Union School District, and Anderson Valley Elementary School in the Anderson Valley Unified School District. Additional information on the SCVP program can be found at these Web sites: <http://www.safestate.org/index.cfm?navId=108> and <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/vp/funding.asp>.

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**Greetings from the Superintendent
(Continued)**

In August I released results of the 2006 Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program that show California students remain on a steady trajectory of improved student achievement. Forty-two percent of students statewide scored at the proficient and advanced level in English-language arts, an increase of 2 percentage points over last year, and 40 percent of students scored at the proficient and advanced level in mathematics, also an increase of 2 percentage points over last year.

Since 2003 when all state tests were completely aligned to state standards for the first time, the number of California students who scored proficient and above in English-language arts has grown by 7 percentage points, and the number of students who scored proficient or above in mathematics grew by 5 percentage points. I am extremely pleased that these results show that California's public school students continue to make steady gains in nearly every subject and grade level.

Noteworthy gains were made this year in many areas. Second through fourth graders made steady gains in math with scores ranging from 54 to 59 percent at proficient and above. The greatest gains in English-language arts came in grade two, where 47 percent of students scored at the proficient and advanced levels, and in grade three, where 36 percent scored at that level – marking a 5 percentage point increase over last year for each grade. Additional information about school, school district, county, and state level results for the 2006 STAR Program have been posted on the California Department of Education's Web site at <http://star.cde.ca.gov>.

The gains we have realized over a five-year period clearly show that reforms focused on our world-class academic standards are working for our students. We must continue that focus and hard work to prepare all California students to succeed in higher education or in the work force. Thank you for your continuing hard work on behalf of California's students and have a good school year.

JACK O'CONNELL

Connecting Kids to Healthcare

The Connecting Kids (CK) to Healthcare Through Schools program is designed to enlist the active participation of key organizations, agencies, and associations in promoting affordable healthcare coverage for children. It is funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation in partnership with the Public Health Institute and the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board. CK has been successful with school-based outreach through the distribution of the Request for Information (RFI) form. The RFI form provides information about children's health coverage programs and asks parents if they would like to receive additional information.

To request the RFI form, please use the parent information form, which has been distributed to schools, school agencies and community based organizations through an annual mailing done by the California Department of Education and CK. If you have not received a form, you may access it by visiting the CK Web site at <http://www.connecting-kids.com>. The form may be returned directly to the local school or to a centralized statewide administrator. CK can

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**Connecting Kids to Healthcare
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customize the RFI form to suit local needs and assist your outreach efforts. The RFI form may be requested in multiple languages and needed quantities to facilitate local school-based outreach efforts. Upon receipt of a completed form, the parent will be mailed a joint Healthy Families Program/Medi-Cal for Families Program (HFP/MCFP) application.

Schools have proven to be one of the most effective ways of referring and enrolling uninsured children into healthcare coverage programs in California as well as nationally. Conducting healthcare coverage outreach through schools is a commonsense and high-impact strategy for reaching families that are in need of coverage. Schools provide many opportunities for outreach through existing services provided to children such as the National School Lunch Program, health services, school-based clinics or school nurses. These services provide a great opportunity to inform families about available healthcare coverage. Since school representatives provide parents with a lot of information about programs and services, it would be beneficial for parents to hear from them about the State's low-cost and no-cost healthcare coverage programs. Together we have the potential to assist approximately 400,000 uninsured children who are eligible for Healthy Families and Medi-Cal programs. You can play an important role in helping parents access affordable healthcare coverage for their children. Here is what you can do:

- Distribute the "Good News About Health Coverage" (RFI) flyer to parents of children involved in your programs. Flyers are available in many different languages.
- If you are unable to duplicate large quantities, bulk print orders are available through our program. CK will also provide you with specialized copies of the RFI personalized with your program's contact information.
- If you need assistance with ordering the form, or would like to customize your order form, please contact the CK program by calling the toll free number 1-800-670-4567 or visit our Web site to download forms at <http://www.connecting-kids.com>.
- Promote HFP/MCFP by posting or distributing the popular Benefit and Eligibility flyer. This flyer is available in English and Spanish. Promotional items may also be available to you for use at health fairs, back to school nights and parent-teacher conferences. Please contact CK to check availability.

After School Programs**What are after school programs?**

After school programs are designed to provide safe and educationally enriching alternatives for children and youths during nonschool hours. After school programs are created through partnerships between schools and local community agencies and include two key elements aimed at helping students in kindergarten through ninth grade meet and exceed state and local

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**After School Programs
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standards. The two after school program components include: 1) academic and literacy assistance to provide tutoring and homework support, and 2) an array of educational enrichment activities that reinforce and complement the school's academic program. Appropriate nutrition is also required for student participants. The programs are aligned with the regular school day program and play an increasingly critical role in providing a supportive learning environment for students.

The intent of both state and federal after school programs is to create incentives for establishing locally driven, comprehensive before and after school enrichment programs to support and extend student learning. Local collaboratives of school and community partners work together to design and manage support for learning beyond the school day in safe and constructive environments.

What are the different types of currently funded after school programs?

The California Department of Education (CDE) currently administers the following programs:

1. The After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program was authorized in 2002 by California *Education Code (EC)* sections 8482 through 8494.6 as a result of the Proposition 49 initiative. The ASES Program provides state funding to serve pupils in kindergarten and grades one through nine, inclusive, at participating public elementary, middle or junior high, and charter schools. Schools are eligible to participate in the ASES Program if a minimum of 50 percent of their pupils are eligible for free or reduced-cost meals through the school lunch program of the United States Department of Agriculture.
2. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program was authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Title IV, Part B). The 21st CCLC Program provides federal funding for comprehensive after school programs to support students in kindergarten through grade twelve attending schools eligible for Title I funding (particularly students who attend schools in need of improvement) with academic enrichment opportunities and supportive services to help the students meet state and local standards in core content areas.

The California 21st CCLC Program for kindergarten through grade nine is further defined in *EC* sections 8484.7 through 8484.8. The 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens Program is further defined in *EC* sections 8420 through 8428 and 8484.8(h) for a comprehensive program in support of grades nine through twelve inclusive at eligible high schools.

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**After School Programs
(Continued)****Will there be other funding opportunities?**

In 2002 Proposition 49 established the After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program and amended California *Education Code* Section 8482 to rename the former Before and After School Learning and Safe Neighborhood Partnerships Program. ASES Programs are currently supported by \$121.6 million in state funds. The 2006-07 budget increases available ASES funding to \$550 million and will significantly increase the number of ASES funded schools. Entities eligible to apply for ASES funds include local educational agencies (LEAs), such as school districts, county offices of education, and direct-funded charter schools, and cities, counties, or nonprofit organizations with the approval of an LEA.

When will the Request for Applications (RFA) be available?

The Governor has signed SB 638 and a new RFA has been released. The RFA is posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/as/>.

How can schools prepare for the RFA?

Prospective applicants for an ASES grant may want to take the following steps to prepare:

- Sign up on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov> under “Resources and Funding Opportunities” to be notified as soon as new funding becomes available.
- Review the program descriptions for both ASES and 21st CCLC programs at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba> to gain an overview of program requirements.
- Begin the important planning work necessary prior to submitting an application for after school funding, such as establishing collaborative partnerships, securing community support, securing match funding, and developing a program plan.

To obtain more information about the ASES Program, contact the After School Partnerships Office at (916) 319-0923, e-mail at afterschool@cde.ca.gov, or visit the Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba>.

Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

The United States Department of Health and Human Services has indicated that as many as four in ten school-age children could become ill if an avian influenza pandemic were to hit in this country. To have that many students affected by a pandemic would have a tremendous impact on schools.

In September 2005 President George Bush launched the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza at the U.N. General Assembly to heighten awareness of



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**Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)
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the threat of bird flu and to work to establish resources that will help prevent, detect, and limit the spread of animal and human pandemic influenza within and between national borders. Since that time federal, state, and local government agencies have taken steps to provide education on pandemic preparedness for the population before a pandemic occurs. Even though it is not certain whether a flu pandemic will occur, preparation now is critical. The following information is provided to assist parents, school personnel, and community agencies to begin a planning process to prepare for a flu pandemic.

What is avian influenza, (bird flu)?

Bird flu is an infection caused by avian influenza viruses. This strain of flu is transmitted to humans from birds. Influenza viruses cause infections of the respiratory tract and in some cases the complications can cause pneumonia. Since bird flu is a new virus that has not been seen before, most people will not have any immunity to protect themselves against it. Bird flu does not yet spread easily from person to person; close exposure to an infected bird is needed to cause a human infection. The danger will come when, and if, a mutation makes human-to-human transmission easy.

How do people become infected?

People who are in direct contact with infected birds or surfaces and objects contaminated by their waste are at risk of becoming infected with bird flu. Most of the human cases to date have been in rural areas where families have small flocks of poultry that roam freely and are allowed to enter the homes sometimes or share outdoor space where children play. Currently the virus is not spread by human-to-human contact.

What steps can be taken to slow the spread of a flu pandemic?

In the event that a pandemic occurs, it is recommended that people take the following steps to stop the spread of germs and viruses and to slow the spread of the flu pandemic:

- Stay informed by listening to reports on the radio and television.
- Visit Web sites that provide information about pandemic flu.
- Wash your hands often using soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue or a sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Dispose of used tissues in the trash and then wash your hands.
- Stay home and away from others as much as possible when you are sick.
- Keep sick children home from school.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

To obtain additional information about pandemic bird flu, visit the California Health and Human Services Agency Web site at <http://www.chhs.ca.gov> or the Centers for Disease Control Web site at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov>.

**California Kindergarten Survey 2006 Update**

The *California Kindergarten Survey 2006 (CKS 2006)*, an online survey released in spring 2006, is centered on the 5,600 California schools that have kindergartens. As of July 2006 approximately 2,700 schools representing roughly 49 percent of the schools with kindergarten enrollment have responded to the survey. The primary purpose of

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**California Kindergarten Survey 2006 Update
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CKS 2006 is to obtain systematic information about the extent and characteristics of extended/full day kindergarten programs in California.

When the data collection phase of *CKS 2006* is completed, a variety of uses of the data will be possible. A compilation of the data will be available to legislators, the CDE and other state departments, county and district personnel, researchers, the media, and stakeholder organizations. The data collected from *CKS 2006* may be used to inform policy, further research on early learners and related kindergarten topics, and report on topics relative to kindergarten issues and program development.

A report of the survey data and topics of interest will be available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov> in fall 2006. The report will characterize the data in summative and descriptive detail such as the number of schools, schedule configurations, and programmatic characteristics of schools conducting extended-day kindergarten programs.

The CDE has extended the *CKS 2006* response period through November 1, 2006. The longer period will enable schools that have not completed the survey to include their data in the overall survey results. A higher response rate will allow the CDE to collect complete data that will reflect an accurate picture of extended day programs throughout the state. School-site administrators with kindergarten enrollments who have not already completed the survey are requested to do so as soon as possible. For questions about the *CKS 2006*, please contact Onda Johnson, Consultant, by telephone at (916) 323-0482 or by e-mail at ojohnson@cde.ca.gov.

***2006 Visitor's Guide to High Performing Elementary Schools***

The *2006 Visitor's Guide to High Performing Elementary Schools (Visitor's Guide)* is a Web-based directory of successful, replicable practices used by some of the top-performing elementary schools in California. It features over 400 practices from 175 schools recognized in one of three statewide award programs: Distinguished Schools, Blue Ribbon Nominees, and Title I Academic Achievement Schools. All three programs identify and honor some of the state's most exemplary and inspiring schools. The *Visitor's Guide* represents an effort to recognize and disseminate successful practices statewide. Ideally, the guide will lead to telephone or e-mail contacts or, better yet, peer interactions at the participating school site. Participating schools indicate which months are open for visits to their sites. Telephone calls are welcomed.

The school profiles in the *Visitor's Guide* will include achievement and demographic data in addition to descriptions of one to three signature practices. Visitors will be able to search for a school or practice that matches their own school's needs or interest. Signature practices are practices or programs that have been deemed by school leaders to make a significant positive

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**2006 Visitor's Guide to High
Performing Elementary Schools
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impact on student achievement at their schools. The practices fall into one of six areas of school programs: leadership and school-wide planning; standards and assessments for decision making; curriculum and instructional practice; staff development; teacher leadership and collaboration; student support; and family and community partnerships. These areas are based on the Distinguished Schools rubric and the Essential Program Components. Posting of the *Visitor's Guide* on the California Department of Education Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov> is anticipated by November 2006.

Calendar of Events**October**

October 19–22, 2006

[California Science Teachers Association](#) (CSTA)

California Science Education Conference

Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, San Francisco, California

CSTA, registration@cascience.org (916) 979-7004

November

November 1–5, 2006

[National Coalition of Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\) Title I Parents](#)

33rd Annual National Conference

Marriott Los Angeles Airport Hotel, Los Angeles, California

Mari Hinkle, liahinkle@aol.com, (209) 473-7088

November 3–5, 2006

[California Association of Compensatory Education \(CACE\)](#)

No Child Left Behind: Annual Parent Leadership Conference

Red Lion Hotel, Sacramento, California

Judy Goddess, conference@caceinfo.com, (415)759-1994

November 3–5, 2006

[California Mathematics Council](#)

Annual Palm Springs Conference

Convention Center, Palm Springs, California

Mike Contino, cmc-math@sbcglobal.net, (888) 262-6284

November 10–13, 2006

[California Library Association \(CLA\)](#)

CLA 108th Annual Conference and Exhibition

Sacramento Convention Center, California

Susan Negreen, info@cla-net.org, (916) 447-8541

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**Calendar of Events
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November 14–17, 2006

California Migrant Education Even Start

12th Migrant Education Even Start (MEES) Conference
Holiday Inn Capitol Plaza, Sacramento, California
Adriana Simmons, asimmons@bcoe.org, (916) 443-9225

November 16–18, 2006

[California School Library Association](#) (CSLA)

CSLA Annual Conference
Convention Center, Sacramento, California
Carol Shuey, cshuey@astound.net, (925) 673-1236

November 30–December 3, 2006

[California Mathematics Council](#)

Annual Asilomar Mathematics and Administrators Teacher Leaders Conferences
Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, California
Mike Contino, cmc-math@sbcglobal.net, (888) 262-6284

Resources

Answers to frequently asked questions about pandemic flu that provide information about how schools can prepare for a possible pandemic are posted on the California Department of Education Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/>.

The United States government has posted information about avian and pandemic flu to help people to become informed and prepared on its Web site at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov>. The resources include planning checklists, questions and answers, and general information about pandemic flu.

Programmatic and fiscal resources to build, implement, and sustain quality before and after school programs, including school-age care and other out-of-school opportunities for children and youths are posted on the California Department of Education Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba>.

The California Department of Education (CDE) offers information regarding student testing on its Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr>.

The CDE also offers information regarding curriculum frameworks, the adoption cycle for instructional materials in kindergarten through grade eight, and the academic content standards on its Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/index.asp>.

Check It Out! is a publication designed to help school districts and schools assess the state of their school libraries and the policies that support and guide them. The guide is posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/checkitout.asp>.

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**Resources
(Continued)**

The 2006 *Educational Resources Catalog* is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn>. The catalog includes a description of CDE publications and resources and information on how to order the documents.

The National Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) has posted several resources for parents and educators on its Web site: <http://www.pta.com>. The *Our Children Newsletter* provides parents with resources and information about how to make households, neighborhoods, schools, and communities better places for children. The newsletter is posted on the PTA Web page at http://www.pta.org/pr_our_children_magazine.html and is written in English and in Spanish.

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